



Washington Secretary of State

CLEARINGHOUSE

ELECTIONS NOTICE

Issue #12-03
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Voting Centers and Ballot Deposit Sites

New rules for voting centers and deposit sites are summarized below; legislative changes from 2011 are also included. This replaces information previously issued in Clearinghouse #08-02.

As county election departments prepare for the 2012 fall elections, it's necessary to anticipate higher than normal volumes of returned ballots at ballot deposit sites and voting centers. The amplified volume may require additional deposit sites as well as training more staff.

The attached chart, "Voting Center and Deposit Site Requirements," based on RCW 29A.40.160, WAC 434-250-100 and 105, illustrates specific requirements for voting centers, staffed and unstaffed deposit sites.

What is a voting center? Any location that offers replacement ballots, provisional ballots, or direct recording electronic (DRE) devices is considered a voting center. Each County Auditor shall open a voting center each primary, special, and general election.

The voting center must be open during business hours during the voting period, which begins eighteen days before, and ends at 8:00 pm on Election Day. It is no longer a requirement to be open at 7:00 am on Election Day.

Voting centers are fully accessible locations that also offer voting in a manner that provides for voter privacy. The Americans with Disabilities Act Checklist for Polling Places shall be used when determining the accessibility of a voting center. For each voting center, the County Auditor must have a contingency plan to accommodate accessible voting in the event that an AVU malfunctions.

If the voting center offers voting on a DRE, the voter must either provide photo identification consistent with RCW 29A.40.160, or, sign the ballot declaration required by WAC 434-230-015. The signature on the declaration must be verified against the signature in the voter registration record before the voter may vote on a DRE.

WAC 434-250-105(l)(e) clarifies the use of sample ballots in lieu of provisional ballots, but only if the sample ballot meets provisional ballot requirements in RCW 29A.36.115.

All requirements for staffed deposit sites apply to voting centers. For further details about voting center availability, notices, or required materials please refer to the chart.

What is a ballot deposit site? If a location only receives ballots and does not issue ballots, the site is either a staffed or unstaffed deposit site. Staffed deposit sites must be staffed by at least two people.

Ballot boxes must be secured at all times with seal logs that document each time the box is opened and by whom. When ballots are transported, they must be placed into secured transport carriers and returned to the County Auditor's Office or another designated location.

Ballot boxes located outdoors must be constructed of durable material able to withstand weather, removal, and vandalism. During the voting period, two people who are either employees of or appointed by the County Auditor must empty each ballot box with sufficient frequency to prevent damage and unauthorized access to ballots.

Within twenty-five feet of a ballot deposit site that is not located within a voting center, no person may electioneer, circulate campaign materials, solicit signatures, or impede the voting process.

At exactly 8:00 pm on Election Day, all ballot boxes must be emptied or secured to prevent the deposit of additional ballots. If a ballot envelope is returned after 8:00 pm, deposit site staff must note the time and place and refer the ballot to the County Canvassing Board.

For further requirements please refer to the attached chart, and please contact the [Certification & Training Program](#) if you have questions.

Voting Center and Deposit Site Requirements

Ballot Deposit Site Types	Voting Center <i>WAC 434-250- 105, RCW 29A.40.160</i>	Staffed <i>WAC 434-250-100</i>	Unstaffed <i>WAC 434-250-100</i>
Receives ballots	Yes	Yes	Yes
Issues Ballots	Yes – AVU and provisional ballots are required; replacement ballots optional. Ballot materials must include a voter declaration.	No	No
Staffing	Attended at all times by at least two staff members or qualified appointees. Must subscribe to oath.	Attended at all times by at least two staff members or qualified appointees. Must subscribe to oath.	Not staffed except when box is emptied; two staff members or qualified appointees must be present when box is accessed or emptied.
Appointee Qualifications (if not county election staff)	Representatives of different major political parties whenever possible, who subscribe to oath of duties.	Representatives of different major political parties whenever possible, who subscribe to oath of duties.	County Auditor employees or appointees.
Site Hours	As a voting center, the County Auditor’s Office must be open during regular office hours beginning the day ballots are mailed until Election Day (excluding weekends and legal holidays). Other locations – hours are established by the Auditor. On Election Day, all voting centers must remain open until 8:00 pm.	Dates and times as established by the County Auditor and open until 8:00 pm on Election Day.	Open 18 days prior to the election until 8:00 pm Election Day.
Accessibility	Must be located in an accessible environment free of barriers to the mobility or functioning of voters. This includes the routes of travel to and through buildings used for voting. Offers accessible voting in a manner that provides for voter privacy. AVU is available during business hours, beginning 18 days before, and ends at 8 pm on Election Day.	As appropriate.	As appropriate.
Signage	Must display current HAVA poster, date of the election, instructions on	As appropriate.	As appropriate.

Voting Center and Deposit Site Requirements

Ballot Deposit Site Types	Voting Center <i>WAC 434-250- 105, RCW 29A.40.160</i>	Staffed <i>WAC 434-250-100</i>	Unstaffed <i>WAC 434-250-100</i>
	how to mark a ballot, and signage outside the building indicating it as a place for voting.		
Notices	<p>The Notice of Election must include information on how a voter can obtain a ballot. (RCW 29A.52.355)</p> <p>During a primary or general election that includes a partisan office, display the appropriate notice provided in WAC 434-230-015(3)(j) or (k).</p>		
Security	<p>Must be able to conduct real time verification for DRE voters; require identification for DRE or provisional voters; provide declaration forms for voters to sign; ballot box secured at all times; documentation of access to ballots; and accountability of all ballots issued.</p> <p>At 8:00 pm on Election Day, all ballot boxes must be emptied or secured.</p>	<p>Must be secured at all times, with seal logs that document each time a box is accessed and by whom. Deposit boxes may be accessed by authorized staff only. Sealed containers must be used when transporting ballots. At 8:00 pm on Election Day, all ballot boxes must be emptied or secured.</p> <p>Within 25 ft., no person may electioneer or interfere with the voting process. The County Auditor may contact a law enforcement agency for assistance if necessary to maintain order.</p>	<p>Must be secured at all times, with seal logs that document each time a box is accessed and by whom. Deposit boxes must be emptied by authorized staff only; constructed to withstand weather, removal, and vandalism. Site must be emptied often enough to prevent damage to ballots and unauthorized access to ballots. Sealed containers must be used when transporting ballots. At 8:00 pm on Election Day, all ballot boxes must be emptied or secured.</p> <p>Within 25 ft., no person may electioneer or interfere with the voting process. The County Auditor may contact a law enforcement agency for assistance if necessary to maintain order.</p>
Other Supplies	Must provide voters' pamphlet or sample ballot; voter registration forms; instructions on how to mark the ballot; and, if mandated, election materials in alternate language(s).		